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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DECAL joins Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC)
For Annual Conference at Gwinnett Center**

*Nearly 3,000 Early Care and Education Professionals will participate in over
150 State Approved Workshops*

ATLANTA, Ga., (September 12, 2012) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) encourages its affiliated teachers, programs, and providers to participate in the 46th Annual Conference of the Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC) being held September 28-29, 2012, at the Gwinnett Center. The theme for this year's conference is "Together for Children."

Nearly 3,000 early care and education professionals are expected to increase their knowledge and experience by taking part in over 150 state approved workshops, networking, and professional learning opportunities. Sessions range from brain development to science to public policy.

"We are always excited to participate in the GAYC annual conference, but even more so this year as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Georgia's Pre-K and mark close to 900 programs participating in Quality Rated, our new voluntary system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs," said DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. "This collaboration between GAYC, DECAL, and others helps streamline our ongoing efforts to provide professionals with relevant resources and best practices."

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On Friday, September 28, 2012, from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM, DECAL will host a special session updating attendees on “What’s New at DECAL.” Commissioner Cagle; Assistant Commissioner for Programs Carol Hartman; Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services Kay Hellwig; Pre-K Director Monica Warren; Nutrition Education Manager Monica Griffin; and Director of Research and Evaluation Dr. Bentley Ponder will present at this informative session.

GAYC is celebrating 46 years of bringing exceptional training, keynotes and featured speakers to Georgia. This conference has been carefully planned to offer content and skill development and to keep early educators up-to-date on the initiatives of the organizations and agencies in Georgia dedicated to early care and education.

For more information and registration for the GAYC Annual Conference, call 404-222-0014 or visit www.gayconline.org/

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.

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